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# A Gentleman From Mississippi

By THOMAS A. WISE

Novelized From the Play by Frederick R. Toombs

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### CHAPTER X.

#### WHEN SENATORS DISAGREE.

THE wisecracks of Washington had nightly predicted that the site of the hundred million dollar gulf naval base would be decided on in March after the excitement and gayety attending the presidential inauguration had subsided.

On the morning of the day before this action of the committee on naval affairs was to be taken Secretary Haines sat at his desk in Senator Langdon's committee room in the capitol. Richard Cullen, the favorite associate of Haines in his journalistic days, out earlier than usual on his daily round of the departments for news for his Chicago paper, had strolled in and attempted a few of his characteristic cynicisms. Haines usually found them entertaining, but these were directed at Senator Langdon.

"Now, let me tell you something, Dick," the secretary answered firmly. "Don't you work off all your dyspeptic ideas in this neighborhood. My senator is a great man. They can't appreciate him up here because he's honest—crystal clear. I used to think I knew what a decent citizen, a real man, ought to be, but he's taught me some new things. He'll teach them all something before he gets through."

Cullen hung one leg over Haines' desk.

"You're a nice, quiet, gentlemanly little optimist, and I like you, old fellow," retorted Cullen. "But don't deceive yourself too much. Your Senator Langdon is personally one of the best ever. But he was born a mark, and a mark he'll be to the end of time."

"He looks good now. Sure, I like his speeches, and all that, but just wait."

When some of those old foxes in the senate want to put his head in the bag and tie it down, they won't have any trouble at all."

Smiling, Haines looked up at his cynical friend.

"The bag 'I have to go over my head, too," he said with a nod.

"Well, I don't know that Peabody 'd have to strain himself very much or get such an awful big bag to drop you both in, if it comes right down to that, old chap. You're making a mistake. You're as bad as your old man. You're a beautiful pair of optimists, and you a good newspaper man, too—It's a shame!"

After momentary hesitation Cullen continued, thoroughly serious.

"Bud, my old friend," he said in low tone, glancing quickly about, "there's one thing that you've got to put a stop to. It's hurting you."

The secretary's face showed his bewilderment.

"What do you mean?" he snapped abruptly. "Out with it!"

"I mean," replied Cullen, "that rumors are going around that you are keeping Langdon away from the crowd of 'insiders' in the senate for your own purposes—that, in short, you plan to—"

"I understand," was the quick interruption. "I am accused of wanting to 'deliver' Senator Langdon, guarantee his vote, on some graft proposition, so that I can get the money and not be himself. Consequently I'm tipping him off on what measures are honest, so that he'll vote for them, until—until I've offered my price, then influence him to vote for some big crooked scheme, telling him it is all right. He votes as I suggest, and I get the money!"

"That's what 'delivering a man' means in Washington," dryly answered the Chicago correspondent. "It means winning a man's confidence, his support, his vote, through friendship and then selling it for cash."

"But you, Dick, you have—"

"Of course, old man, I have denied the truth of this. I knew you too well to doubt you. Still, the yarn is hurting you. Remember that western senator who was 'delivered' twice, both ways, on a graft bill?" he laughingly asked the secretary.

"Should say I did, Dick. That is the record for that game. It was a corporation measure. One railroad wanted it; another opposed it. The senator innocently told an eastern senator that he was going to vote for the bill. Then the easterner went to the railroad wanting the bill passed and got \$7,000 on his absolute promise that he would get Senator X. to vote for it, who, of course, did vote for it."

"Yes," said Cullen, "and later, when Senator X. heard that Senator Z. had got money for his vote, he was wild. Then when another effort was made to pass the bill (which had been defeated) the 'delivered' senator said to Z. as he met him unexpectedly: 'You scoundrel, here's where I get square with you to some extent. Anyway, I'm going to vote against that bill this time and make a long speech against it too.' Senator Z. then hustled to the lobbyist of the railroad that wanted the bill killed and guaranteed him that for \$10,000 he could get Senator

X. to change his vote, to vote against the bill."

"And he got the money, too, both ways," added Haines as Cullen concluded, "and both railroads to this day think that X. received the money from Z."

"Of course," said Cullen, "but X. was to blame, though. He didn't know enough to keep to himself how he was going to vote. Any man that talks that way will be 'delivered.'"

"I know how to stop those rumors, for I'm sure it's Peabody's work, he thinking Langdon will hear the talk and mistrust me," began Haines, when in came Senator Langdon himself, his face beaming contentedly. Little did the junior senator from Mississippi realize that he was soon to face the severest trial, the most vital crisis, of his entire life.

Cullen responded to the senator's cheery greeting of "Mornin', everybody!"

"Senator," he asked Cullen, "my paper wants your opinion on the question of the election of senators by



"That concerns future senators."

popular vote. Do you think the system of electing senators by vote of state legislatures should be abolished?"

The Mississippian cocked his head to one side.

"I reckon that's a question that concerns future senators and not those already elected," he chuckled.

Haines laughed at Cullen, who thrust his pad into his pocket and hurried away.

"It is today that I appear before the ways and means committee, isn't it?" Langdon queried of his secretary.

"Yes," said Haines, consulting his memorandum book. "At 11 o'clock you go before ways and means to put forward the needs of your state on the matter of the reduction of the tariff on aluminum hydrates. The people of Mississippi believe it has actually put back life into the exhausted cotton lands. In Virginia they hope to use it on the tobacco fields."

"Where does the pesky stuff come from?" asked the senator.

"From South America," coaxed the secretary. "The south is in a hurry for it, so the duty must come down. You'll have to bluff a bit, because Peabody and his crowd will try to make a kind of bargain—wanting you to keep up iron and steel duties. But you don't believe that iron and steel need help, you will tell them, don't you see, so that they will feel the necessity of giving you what you want for the south in order to gain your support for the iron and steel demands."

The office door opened and Senator Peabody appeared.

"Peabody," whispered the secretary. Instantly the Mississippian had his cue. His back to Peabody, he rose, brought down his fist heavily upon the desk and expounded oratorically to Haines:

"What we can produce of aluminum hydrates, my boy, is problematical, but the south is in a hurry for it, and the duty must come down. It's got to come down, and I'm not going to do anything else until it does."

The secretary stretched across the desk.

"Excuse me, senator; Senator Peabody is here," he said loudly and surprisedly, as though he had just sighted the boss of the senate.

The Mississippian turned.

"Oh, good morning, senator. I was just talking with my secretary about that hydrate clause."

Peabody bowed slightly.

"Yes, I knew it was coming up," he said, "so I just dropped over. I'm not

opposed to it or any southern measure, but it makes it more difficult for me when you southern people oppose certain Pittsburg interests that I have to take care of."

Langdon smiled.

"I've never been in Pittsburg," but they tell me it looks as if it could take care of itself."

The visitor shrugged his shoulders. "That's true enough, but give and take is the rule in political matters, Langdon."

This remark brought a frown to Langdon's face.

"I don't like bargaining between gentlemen, Peabody. More important still, I don't believe American politics has to be run on that plan. Why can't we change a lot of things now that we are here?"

Langdon became so enthused that he paced up and down the room as he spoke.

"Peabody, you and Stevens and I," continued Langdon, "could get our friends together and right now start to make this great capital of our great country the place of the 'square deal,' the place where give and take, bargain and sale, are unknown. We could start a movement that would drive out all secret influences!"

The secretary noticed Peabody's involuntary start.

"The newspapers would help us," went on Langdon. "Public opinion would be with us, and both houses of congress would have to join in the work if we went out in front, led the way and showed them their plain duty. And I tell you, Senator Peabody, that the principles that gave birth to this country, the principles of truth, honesty, justice and independence, would rule in Washington!"

"If Washington cared anything about them, Langdon," interjected the Pennsylvanian.

"That's my point," cried the Mississippian—"let us teach Washington to care about them!"

"Langdon, Langdon," said Peabody patronizingly, "you've seized on a bigger task than you know. After you reform Washington you will have to go on and reform human nature, human instincts, every human being in the country, if you want to make politics this angelic thing you describe. It isn't politics, it's humanity, that's wrong," waving aside a protest from Langdon.

"Anyway your idea is not constitutional, Langdon," continued Peabody.

"You want everybody to have a share in the national government. That wouldn't meet the theory of centralization woven into our political system by its founders. They intended that our government should be controlled by a limited number of representatives, so that authority can be fixed and responsibility ascertained."

"You distort my meaning," cried Langdon. "And, senator, I would like to ask why so many high priced constitutional lawyers who enter congress spend so much time in placing the constitution of the United States between themselves and their duty, sir, between the people and their government, sir, between the nation and its destiny? I want to know if in your opinion the constitution was designed to throttle expression of the public will?"

"Of course not. That's the reason you and I, Langdon, and the others are elected to the senate," added Peabody, starting to leave. Then he halted. "By the way, senator," he said, "I'll do my best to arrange what you want regarding aluminum hydrates for the sake of the south, and I'll also stand with you for Alcatraz for the naval base. Our committee is to make its report tomorrow."

Langdon observed the penetrating gaze that Peabody had fixed on him. It seemed to betray that the Pennsylvanian's apparently careless manner was assumed.

"I'm," coughed Langdon, glancing at Haines. "I'm not absolutely committed to Alcatraz until I'm sure it's the best place. I'll make up my mind today definitely, and I think it will be for Alcatraz."

The boss of the senate went out, glaring venomously at Haines, slamming the door.

A moment later a page boy brought in a card. "Colonel J. D. Telfer, Gulf City," read the senator.

"Bud," he remarked to the secretary, "I'm going to send my old acquaintance, Telfer, mayor of Gulf City, in here for you to talk to. He'll want to know about his town's chances for being chosen as the naval base. I must hurry away, as I have an appointment with my daughters and Mrs. Spangler before going before ways and means."

### CHAPTER XI.

ON THE TRAIL OF THE "INSIDERS."

COLONEL J. D. TELFER (J. D. standing for Jefferson Davis), he explained proudly to Haines proved a warm advocate of the doubtful merits of Gulf City as a hundred million dollar naval base. His flushed face grew redder, his long white hair became disordered, and he tugged at his white mustache continually as he waxed warmer in his efforts to impress the senator's secretary.

"I tell you, Mr. Haines, Gulf City, sah, leads all the south when it comes to choosin' ground fo' a naval base. Her vast expanse of crystal sea, her miles upon miles of silvah sands, sah, protected by a natural harbor and th' islands of Mississippi sound, make her th' only spot to be considered. She's God's own choice and the people's, too, for a naval base."

"But unfortunately congress also has something to say about choosin' it," spoke Haines.

Continued on page seven

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**EAST BOUND.**  
No. 146, Daily Fast Train leaves Cloverport 5:07 A. M. stops at Irvington, West Point, Sittes and Medora only, arrive at Louisville 7:25 A. M.

No. 145, Daily Mail and Express, leaves Cloverport 10:07 A. M. stops at all way stations, arrives Louisville 12:58 P. M.

Train No. 144, Daily, fast mail, leaves Cloverport 4:58 P. M. stops at all way stations, east of Cloverport except Mystic, arrives at Louisville 7:40 P. M.

Train No. 143, Daily, Cloverport accommodation, arrives Cloverport 7:40 P. M.

**WEST BOUND.**  
No. 147, Daily, Henderson accommodation, leaves Cloverport 6:30 A. M. stops at all way stations, arrives Henderson 8:35 A. M.

Train No. 141, Daily, fast mail and express, leaves Cloverport 11:30 A. M. stops only at Hawesville, Lewisport, Maceo, Owensboro, Stanley, Henderson and Evansville, arrives at Louisville 7:50 P. M.

Train No. 143, Mail and Express daily, arrives Cloverport 7:48 P. M., Evansville 10:35 P. M. Stops at all stations.

No. 145, daily St. Louis fast train, leaves Cloverport 11:00 P. M. arrives Evansville 1:35 A. M. St. Louis 7:40 A. M. stops at Hawesville, Owensboro and Henderson only.

Chair cars on trains 141, 142, 143, 144 between Louisville and Evansville. Through sleeping cars and free reclining chair cars on trains 145 and 146, between Louisville, Evansville and St. Louis.

**Fordsville Branch**  
**EAST BOUND.**  
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Train No. 4, Daily except Sunday, leaves Fordsville 3:30 P. M., arrives Irvington 5:30 P. M.

Train No. 6, Sunday only.  
Fordsville 7:00 A. M., Irvington 9:35 A. M.

**WEST BOUND.**  
Train No. 3, Daily except Sunday, leaves Irvington 11:30 A. M., arrives Fordsville 2:55 P. M.

Train No. 5, Daily, leaves Irvington 7:05 P. M., arrives Fordsville 10:15 P. M.